

2 February 1981
MAU-1010

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report - Austrian Bureau - January 1981

I. GENERAL

The most spectacular development in a quiet month was the rise of the U.S. dollar against the Austrian schilling to the highest level in some 3 years--AS14.80 to \$1.00 on 30 January (and going nearly to AS15, at AS14.9675, on 2 February). Bureau January FSR estimates projected a saving in costs of about a net \$100,000 for the full year, if the rate remains strong for the dollar, and proposed that Hqs B&F take back some of the funds for pay, originally projected in 1978 at an exchange rate of AS13.5 to \$1.00. European financial commentators continue to explain the rise by both high U.S. interest rates that draw speculators into dollars, and anticipation that the new Reagan administration's economic and fiscal policies will strengthen the dollar even more.

The stronger exchange rate for the dollar since July 1980 has had a spectacular effect on reducing dollar-equivalent pay for bureau nonstaff alien employees, all paid in Austrian schillings, whose pay schedule remains unchanged since May 1978. Decreases in projected annual dollar pay range from \$8,000 less for the chief monitor down to \$6,000 less for senior monitors in high steps, \$4,000 less for middle-grade monitors and technicians, and even \$2,000 less for the lowest-paid teletypists. The bureau passed on a tentative Embassy report that a just-concluded wage/price spot survey for all other mission local employees (on a different schedule) had indicated a 5.7% cost-of-living pay increase would be recommended to State Department, with possible effective date of 25 January with early approval. On 30 January FBIS Administrative Staff reported there had been "no movement" the past 2 months on Vienna pay schedule questions, with both PMCD and State saying "press of business" had prevented any action so far.

The bureau deferred to C/Operations Group and London Bureau/BBC for further action on coverage of the new OPECNA news agency transmissions after exchanging several messages at mid-month on the merits of Hqs vs. field bureau coverage. No further contacts were made with OPECNA head

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II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. In a relatively quiet month, Polish press production remained fairly high but below the December level, in part because of much-appreciated help from London PMU, whose Polish linguist handled 5 items totaling some 10,000 words over the month, and from Hqs ELAD, to whom a 15,000-word text of "fundamental" guidelines for Polish economic reform was pouched for processing, from a 10/11 January Zolnierz Wolnosci supplement. No word has been received yet from two distributors alerted to bureau interest in the new Polish Solidarity trade union weekly "Jednosc," reportedly being distributed within Poland from early January. //✓

2. Television monitoring produced the bureau's very first textual item from Belgrade TV, an 8 January interview with Portuguese President Eanes filed on 14 January as soon as received from the contractor. Bureau efforts on 22 January to alert the contractor by phone and message to a special program reporting on an LCY Central Committee session were ultimately successful, despite the fact most personnel in Belgrade seemed to be at a farewell reception for Ambassador Lawrence Eagleburger, the editor talking finally with the political counselor's wife. Good quality videocassettes showing most of the LCY leadership close up were pouched ahead of any request, along with five other Belgrade and three Czechoslovak cassettes ordered by consumers. The shipment of 10 in one day on 30 January was the highest ever.

3. Two major defections in Vienna announced only in January--one a Romanian embassy cryptographer who fled 23 November with 110 pounds of secret documents in his bag, and the other the chief Soviet interpreter at the MBFR negotiations who fled on 18 December at the end of the previous negotiating round--were given special attention by the German radio/TV/press team. Both defectors fled to West Germany, where they contacted security/intelligence officials.

B. Communications

Bureau communicators had still another low-error month certain to win another DCA Europe certificate, achieving a CIM reject rate of only 1.43 percent. The Mode V Autodin circuit was down 3:31 with 1,850 words sent via the VCVC altroute. Some apparent mishandling by Croughton ASC of the Phase III rehomeing of Vienna's circuit on 2 January left the bureau with only receive capability during a scheduled Pirmasens ASC outage. Followup exchanges established that in the future Croughton would program for full send-receive capability in rehomeing.

C. Lateral Service

1. At request of the U.S. ICA press attache, the bureau on 8 January began providing to ICA the full outgoing/incoming file of East European FBIS items, minus any "Government Use Only" material, for perusal by various East European U.S. correspondents. The material is for use without attribution to FBIS.
2. On 20 January the bureau recorded videocassettes of the inauguration of President Reagan as carried by Austrian television, with English sound track from Vienna's "Blue Danube Radio" and VOA, for ICA use, as well as two cassettes of an Austrian TV "Club 2" program discussing El Salvador and the U.S. role there. Ambassador Philip M. Kaiser expressed thanks for this recording and said he planned to review the program, which included some strongly anti-U.S. panelists.

D. Technical

1. The promised estimate from the Austrian Hitzinger firm for a high-capacity emergency power generation system to replace the smaller 1976 model that only carries essential radio, communications and lights circuits came in at \$34,600 (for which no bureau funds have been programmed or allotted). The proposal includes automatic switch-over and controls, fuel tank, batteries and technical and legal documentation required by Austrian law. The bureau electronics specialist estimated that some \$10,000 of this estimate could be saved by procuring equipment from U.S. channels. Proposals will be forwarded to Hqs for evaluation.
2. A technical evaluation of new notch filters was pouched to EDSS 8 January.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

1. [] entered on duty 12 January as a German monitor-trainee and is undergoing training with satisfactory progress. She offers Russian as a second language.
2. Message exchanges with Hqs resulted in extensions of editor [] tour to 19 July 1981 and [] tour as electronics specialist to the first week in August, to provide for an overlap with designated replacement [] [] was announced as replacement bureau chief this summer, date unstated.

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3. Bureau administrative assistant [] advised in late January that she would return to work at least part-time on 2 February following surgery and treatment, having been absent since 22 December. In the meantime the bureau received official notification that [] our other assistant, had been designated principal Imprest Fund cashier effective 12 January, with [] as alternate.

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4. A proposal by associate editor [] for part-time contract work status on her scheduled return to duty after maternity/LWOP in mid-April was forwarded to Hqs for concurrence, including a ruling on the impact of the hiring freeze on this position.

B. Building & Grounds

A very unusual mid-winter windstorm with peak winds gusting to over 70 miles per hour on 3 January caused no major damage to the bureau, with only some minor beverage antenna wire entanglement in bushes in the garden. The main Embassy chancery building, by contrast, lost a third of its entire roof including two layers of sheet metal and underlying wood subroof, as well as losing all antennas and lead lines and destruction of two chimneys and damage to a third.

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Chief, FBIS Austrian Bureau

Attachments:

Publishable Wordage Report
Production Report
Engineering Attachment
Staff Personnel Report
Non-Staff Personnel Report
Newspaper and Journal Coverage List
Broadcast Coverage Schedule

cc: Chief, FBIS London Bureau